

ILLEGIB

ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS (AMP) PROJECT

Purpose

The purpose of AMP is to identify, document, and propose solutions for specific administrative problems faced by Federal managers. We intend to build on and add more depth to several other recent efforts to identify major obstacles to good management. We plan to move as soon as possible from problem identification to proposed solutions that are politically and administratively feasible. The purpose of the initial response by group members is to winnow the range of issues so that we can focus our energies rather than scattering them in many directions.

Method

The first step in the issue identification stage is an open ended request for ideas on major problems from specially selected managers. Regional Directors and Assistant Directors for Specific Agencies will each choose a group of 10 - 15 managers in their jurisdictions to participate. We are looking for experienced managers at the SES or GS - 15 level, preferably with line experience.

These individuals will then independently put together a short list of what they perceive to be the main problems facing Federal managers. We expect that they will talk to other managers, review Mr. Sugarman's "starter list," and use other materials we will send out as catalysts to their own thinking. In no way is the "starter list" limiting or definitive. We would like group members to indicate their sense of the relative priority of each issue they identify. We would also like some sense of whether the problems are solvable. That is, we do not want to waste our energies on problems that are clearly impossible to solve. On the other hand, Mr. Sugarman has indicated that there are no "sacred cows" as far as he is concerned. For example, if a change in central regulations or legislation would significantly help Federal managers, it may be appropriate to pursue that change. We do not expect that this stage will involve a lot of the managers' time. Lists should be forwarded within one week of Labor Day to James P. Pfiffner, Office of Personnel Management, Office of the Deputy Director, 1900 E Street, N.W., Washington, D. C., 20415.

When we get these responses we will analyze them and compare them with the results of other problem assessment projects. We will be looking for a consensus on which issues are: 1) most important, and 2) are most likely to be solvable. Once the problems have been identified, we will form task forces to deal with each of them. The members of these task forces will not necessarily be the same people who participated in the initial problem identification stage, although we hope that there will be substantial overlap. We want task force members who have some interest, experience, or expertise in the area of the specific issue they will be dealing with. To the extent possible, each group should include one representative from OPM and one from GSA.

TIMETABLE

August 15	Lists of selected managers sent to Jim Pfiffner
September 12	Deadline for return of initial lists of managerial issues
October 12	Feedback to participants
November 1	Specific projects chosen
November 17	Task forces formed

STARTER LIST OF MANAGERIAL ISSUES

1. Participation in the budgetary process for current and future years. Reallocation of funds during the year. The budget appropriation process.
2. Relocation of budget decision making. Organization: Determination of structure, delegation, standardization, flexibility, etc.
3. Non-monetary controls on staffing patterns (e.g., standard staffing patterns, average grade, average salary, high grade limitations, hiring freezes, etc.).
4. Requirements to contract out or prohibitions against contracting out work. Controls, delegations, regulations, economy, etc.
5. Purpose and determination of standard processes and/or work methods.
6. Restrictions and limitations of purchases to standard GSA schedules.
7. GSA space requirements.
8. Reporting requirements: purpose, utility, economy, duplication, flexibility, etc.
9. Systems for allocation of grant funds.
10. Administrative requirements for grantees (including specifications of eligible organizations).
11. Methods of capital equipment acquisition. Computers, ADP, equipment, vehicles, etc.
12. Imbalances and inflexibility among funds for programs, technical assistance, training, financial audit, and research and evaluation.
13. Inconsistent and conflicting laws and policies impacting on the same program.
14. Timing on inauguration of new programs or modifications to existing programs.
15. Variety and numbers of required approvals to take managerial action.
16. Proliferation of administrative requirements which detract from the ability of managers to accomplish the work of the organization.
17. Personnel ceilings.
18. Personnel classification.
19. Political executive/career executive interface.
20. Intra- and interagency communications.

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STARTER LIST OF UNRESOLVED ISSUES

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- 11 - 1. Participation in the budgetary process for current and future years. Reallocation of funds during the year. The budget appropriation process.
- 12 - 2. Relocation of budget decision making. Organization: Determination of structure, delegation, standardization, flexibility, etc. 0
- 10 - 3. Non-monetary controls on staffing patterns (e.g., standard staffing patterns, average grade, average salary, high grade limitations, hiring freezes, etc.). ✓
- 18 - 4. Requirements to contract out or prohibitions against contracting out work. Controls, delegations, regulations, economy, etc.
- 8 - 5. Purpose and determination of standard processes and/or work methods. ✓
- 14 - 6. Restrictions and limitations of purchases to standard GSA schedules.
- 13 - 7. GSA space requirements.
- 1 - 8. Reporting requirements: purpose, utility, economy, duplication, flexibility, etc. ✓
- 19 - 9. Systems for allocation of grant funds. ✓
- 20 - 10. Administrative requirements for grantees (including specifications of eligible organizations). ✓
- 9 - 11. Methods of capital equipment acquisition. Computers, ADP equipment, vehicles, etc. ✓
- 17 - 12. Imbalances and inflexibility among funds for programs, technical assistance, training, financial audit, and research and evaluation. ✓
- 2 - 13. Inconsistent and conflicting laws and policies impacting on the same program. ✓
- 16 - 14. Timing on inauguration of new programs or modifications to existing programs.
- 3 - 15. Variety and numbers of required approvals to take managerial action. ✓
- 4 - 16. Proliferation of administrative requirements which detract from the ability of managers to accomplish the work of the organization. ✓
- 7 - 17. Personnel ceilings.
- 6 - 18. Personnel classification. ✓
- 15 - 19. Political/executive/career executive interface.
- 5 - 20. Intra and interagency communication. ✓

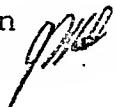
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United States Government
MEMORANDUM

**Office of
Personnel Management**

Subject: Problems in Management Project

Date: July 11, 1980
In Reply Refer To:

From: Jule M. Sugarman
Deputy Director 

Your Reference:

To: Directors of Personnel

Attached for your information is a study completed by Deborah Loeb, my Special Assistant and Jeffrey Diamond, a participant in the President's Executive Exchange Program on assignment to OPM. If you have any comments or questions on the report please don't hesitate to call either Debbi (632-2704) or Jeff (632-5691). Thank you.

PROBLEMS IN MANAGEMENT PROJECT

A STUDY OF
MANAGERS ATTITUDES
IN
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

A Study Conducted for the
Office of Personnel Management
by

Deborah Loeb, Special Assistant
to the Deputy Director

And

Jeffrey Diamond, President's
Executive Exchange Program

January 1980

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Problems In Management Project was to clearly and systematically identify those problems which middle and senior level managers employed by the Federal government believed to be the major impediments to managerial efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector.

The Problems in Management Project was conducted in two interrelated parts. The first phase of the study involved the administration of a written questionnaire to 269 Federal managers from around the country. These surveys were aimed at identifying major management problems or impediments with an emphasis on examining the magnitude of these problems.

The second phase of this project consisted of 50 face-to-face interviews with Federal managers nationwide. These interviews were open-ended and provided managers with an opportunity to identify and discuss three major managerial problems at length with the interviewers. These interviews aided the researchers in analyzing the data from the more widely distributed written questionnaire.

PHASE I

HIGHLIGHTS

Federal managers identified over 25 problems as being major obstacles to their managerial efficiency and effectiveness. The five most frequently cited problems were:

- o The lack of clear and consistent policy direction by top government leadership;
- o An excessive number of required approvals for actions to occur;
- o Increasing budget constraints;
- o Restrictive full time position ceilings
- o An inability to attract and retain quality staff

When asked to identify one or two additional problems nearly 40% of the respondents were unable to cite a "third major problem."

The major additional areas of managerial concern were grouped in the following categories:

- o Employee Morale
- o Accountability
- o Regulations
- o Central Headquarters - Field Interface
- o Budget
- o Physical Space
- o Layers of Approval
- o Procurement Process
- o Personnel System Process
- o Compensation
- o Political Pressures
- o Affirmative Action Requirements
- o Employment Ceilings
- o Participation in Decision Making

No significant differences in responses could be distinguished on the basis of any of the demographic data.

4.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Identification of the Major Problem

In the first survey question respondents were asked to identify the major problem facing them on the job in terms of their ability to successfully carry out their managerial responsibilities.

A lack of clear and consistent policy direction by agency leadership was cited by 12% of the respondents as the major problem facing them. They felt that this lack of direction resulted in inefficient operations because there were no clearly defined goals and objectives to strive for. A corollary that was mentioned was the continually shifting interests of top leadership which made it difficult for managers to effectively do their jobs.

The many layers of approval needed for any activity to occur was the second most frequently mentioned problem managers felt they faced. Waiting for all the necessary approval wastes valuable time and money and often results in a project becoming obsolete before it is implemented according to 11% of those managers interviewed.

Increasing budget constraints was said to be the major problem for managers by 9% of all respondents. This is not a surprising response in view of the shrinking budgets and increased workloads of recent years for Federal managers. In fact, it is somewhat surprising that only 9% of the managers mentioned it as their major problem.

8% of the respondents felt that the FTP ceilings under which they must operate was the major problem managers faced on the job. The concern about FTP ceilings seemed to center around the notion that if managers had the ability to hire more staff they could meet their goals and objectives but without this additional staff power there was no way they could carry out their programs effectively.

The respondents also expressed concerns about several issues related to personnel management: quality staffing, timely staffing, performance appraisals, merit pay, discipline and miscellaneous issues. Combined, these problems comprised 25% of the responses to Question 1. Of these six response categories, the ability of managers to hire and retain quality employees was the primary problem relating to personnel.

The remaining 36% of the responses were divided up among such issues as red tape, labor-management relations, equal employment opportunity, regulation, employee morale and physical space.

See Table 1 for a list of all responses.

Table 1

Question 1. As a manager in the Federal government what do you feel is the major problem you face in trying to accomplish your management goals?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Lack of Direction	12%	33
Layers of Approval	11	29
Budget Constraints	9	25
FIP Ceilings	8	21
Quality Staffing	8	21
Regulation	7	19
Red Tape, Paperwork	4	12
Political Pressure	4	11
Employee Morale	4	11
Timely Staffing	3	9
Discipline	2	6
Procurement	1	4
Accountability	1	4
Performance Standards	1	4
Affirmative Action	1	4
Compensation	1	2
Lack of Training	1	2
Labor-Management Relations	0	1
Miscellaneous - Personnel	10	26
Miscellaneous	8	21
DK/NA/REF	1	2
	<hr/> 100%	<hr/> 269

6.

When the managers were queried as to why the issue they mentioned was a problem, over 50% of the respondents said that it was because it prevented them from effectively performing their job and impeded good planning and management. An additional 15% stated that the problem they faced resulted in wasting both time and money. The remaining responses identified lowered employee morale, increased turnover and decreased productivity as the effect of the problems cited in the first question of the survey.

An overwhelming number of managers (90%) believe that they do not have personal control over the problems that they identified. This seems to indicate a strong feeling of alienation and inability to effect change among managers regarding their ability to carry out their job responsibilities. There were mixed responses concerning where the responsibility lay for resolving the problems that were identified. 38% of the respondents believed that the top management within their individual agency had the responsibility for solving these problems. An additional 20% of the respondents stated that the Office of Personnel Management as a central management agency for the entire Federal workforce had control over these issues. Other agencies, such as the Office of Management and Budget, the Congress, and the Office of the President were cited as having the authorities and responsibilities to deal with these problems.

When asked to identify a second problem that faced managers in doing their job, the responses were again divided among a variety of separate categories. The most frequently cited issue was the inability to hire and retain quality employees (12%). Interestingly, the second most frequent response was that of having no additional major problems in accomplishing their work responsibilities (10%). Not surprisingly, increased budget constraints and lowered employee morale constituted the next 15% of the responses. See Table 2 for a complete list of all responses.

Table 2

Question 5. What are the other one or two major problems you face in your job as a Federal manager?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Staffing Quality	12%	33
Budget	7	19
Layers of Approval	6	16
Morale	6	17
Lack of Direction	5	13
Discipline	4	11
FTP Ceiling	4	12
Lack of Training	4	11
Procurement	3	7
Performance Standards	3	8
Merit Pay	3	8
Staffing - Timeliness	2	5
Physical Space	2	5
Labor-Management Relations	2	5
Regulation	2	6
Affirmative Action	2	6
Compensation	1	2
Accountability	1	4
Political Pressure	1	2
Miscellaneous - Personnel	9	24
Miscellaneous	10	27
DK/NA/REF	26	10
	<hr/> 269	<hr/> 100%

8.

When asked to identify any remaining problems that affect successful management performance, almost 40% of the managers were unable to do so. The responses that were received were divided among so many different categories that a meaningful breakdown was not really possible. See Table 3 for a complete list of responses.

Table 3

Question 5b. What are the other one or two major problems you face in your job as a Federal manager?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Staffing Quality	6%	13
Budget	5	13
Layers of Approval	4	10
Discipline	3	9
FTP Ceiling	3	8
Miscellaneous	3	7
Physical Space	3	7
Morale	3	9
Lack of Direction	3	8
Lack of Training	2	5
Affirmative Action	2	6
Staffing - Timeliness	1	3
Performance Standards	1	4
Procurement	1	4
Labor-Management Relations	1	3
Regulation	1	4
Political Pressure	1	3
Miscellaneous - Personnel	8	21
Miscellaneous	9	23
No Answer	39	104

Intensity of Problem

The questionnaire listed several issues which were considered to be problems facing Federal managers. The managers were asked to indicate the degree of importance that they attributed to each of these issues. The classifications used in the questionnaire to assess the importance of the issues were: "Very Important," "Somewhat Important," "Not An Issue At All," and "Don't Know." The responses to these questions, in general, support the issues identified as problems in the open-ended section of the questionnaire.

Accountability. Nearly 90% of the managers stated that accountability is an "Important" issue with more than one-half (54.8%) saying that it was a "Very Important" issue.

Central Headquarters -- Field Interface. Nearly three quarters (77.4%) of the managers felt that the interaction which occurs between central office and field installations is "Important" to managerial effectiveness.

Physical Space. Although adequate physical space is often mentioned as a serious management problem, only 23% of the respondents identified it as a "Very Important" issue as contrasted to over 26% of the respondents who felt that it was "Not An Issue At All."

Procurement Process. One-third of the respondents considered the procurement process to be a "Very Important" issue in their jobs. It should be noted that one-fifth of the respondents viewed procurement as "Not An Issue At All."

Regulations. The current concern with over-regulation by the government was expressed by 86.7% in the "Very Important" category.

Budget. As could have been anticipated, managers consider budget to be an "Important" issue with an overriding impact on their job (90.4%).

Layers of Approval. The number of approvals needed for an action to occur is a "Very Important" problem according to 51.5% of the respondents. An additional one-third of the respondents identified this as a "Somewhat Important" issue.

Personnel System Responsiveness. 63.3% of the managers identified personnel system responsiveness as a "Very Important" managerial concern with an additional 30% viewing this as a "Somewhat Important" issue.

Employee Morale. Employee morale is a "Very Important" issue to 73% of the respondents. Another one-fifth of the managers regarded it as a "Somewhat Important" issue.

10.

Compensation. Less than one-half of the respondents considered compensation to be "Important" in terms of managerial effectiveness and efficiency.

Political Pressure. While nearly one-fourth of the respondents felt that political pressure was a "Very Important" managerial concern, almost one-third viewed it as "Not An Issue At All." The remaining 42.6% of the respondents cited this as a "Somewhat Important" issue.

Affirmative Action Requirements. 34.8% of the Managers felt that affirmative action requirements are a "Very Important" issue. 41.9% considered this to be a "Somewhat Important" problem and the remaining 19.6% of the respondents considered this to be "Not An Issue At All."

Participation in Decision-Making. Participation in decision-making is believed to be a "Very Important" issue by one-half of those surveyed. Another 37.4% of the respondents stated it was a "Somewhat Important" issue.

Employment Ceilings. Nearly 60% of the managers viewed employment ceilings as a "Very Important" concern, with 33% of the respondents identifying it as "Somewhat Important."

See Table 4 for a breakout of all responses.

Table 4

6. Listed below are several issues which have been identified as problems facing Federal managers today.

Please indicate whether you feel the issue is Very Important, Somewhat Important, or Not An Issue At All by circling the appropriate number.

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not An Issue At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Accountability	54.8%	33.0%	8.9%	3%
Central Headquarters -- Field Interface	43.0	34.4	17.8	4.5
Physical Space	23.0	48.5	26.3	1.8
Procurement Process	32.2	40.7	20.7	6.0
Regulations	47.4	39.3	11.1	1.8
Budget	55.6	34.8	8.5	.8
Layers of Approval	51.5	32.6	13.3	2.3
Personnel System Responsiveness	63.3	30.0	4.8	1.5
Employee Morale	73.0	20.7	5.6	.4
Compensation	44.1	43.0	11.1	1.4
Political Pressures	24.4	42.6	29.6	2.9
Affirmative Action Requirements	34.8	41.9	19.6	3.4
Participation in Decision-Making	50.4	37.4	10.4	1.4
Employment Ceilings	57.8	33.0	7.4	1.4

12.

Facets of the Problem

The next series of questions on the survey consisted of statements which probed for a more in-depth perspective on the types of issues affecting managerial performance. The respondents were asked to "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree" with a series of statements that were provided to them. See Figure 5 for a list of all responses.

The first series of these statements related to the role and impact of the budget in relation to a manager's ability to carry out his/her assigned program responsibilities. Over 50% of the managers believe that tighter budget controls have had an impact on their ability to manage and carry out their programs. Managers are split fairly evenly concerning their ability to use other resources and tools to compensate for the increased budget constraints that they are experiencing. In addition, approximately 50% of the managers believe that they have sufficient incentives for controlling their budgets. The final question concerning the issue of budget relates to the adequacy of training for effectively dealing with the budget process. One half of the respondents indicated that they felt there was a lack of adequate training in the budget process.

The next focal point in the survey related to the civil service system. Managers expressed significant concern (78%) with the length of time required to hire new employees. The lack of timeliness in the staffing process acts as an impediment to effective program performance according to the managers. Half of the respondents indicated a lack of responsiveness by their own agency personnel offices to their management needs. However, 65% of the managers believed that the decentralization of the staffing process to the individual agencies could greatly improve personnel system responsiveness. Another aspect related to the staffing process was compensation. 61.5% of the respondents felt that the present compensation package was not adequate to attract and retain quality employees.

Almost one half of the respondents do not feel that the Civil Service Reform Act will make the personnel system more responsive to their needs. In addition, approximately 47% of the managers do not think that the newly established Senior Executive Service will improve the quality of managers in the Federal work force. It should be noted that an additional 28.9% of the respondents had no opinion concerning the impact of the Senior Executive Service. Another element of the Civil Service Reform Act, merit pay, is not currently viewed to be a useful management tool for rewarding effective employee performance by 55.7% of those interviewed.

Managers feel that adequate physical space is important for effective management. 77.4% of the managers believe that physical space is highly related with employee effectiveness and morale.

The current procurement process inhibits the timely completion of projects according to 66.3% of the respondents. Almost three quarters of the managers surveyed feel that the process should be simplified in order to improve their ability to manage effectively and efficiently.

The many layers of approval necessary for taking action were cited as hindering management effectiveness by approximately 70% of the managers. The managers believed that they would be able to improve their efficiency if the necessary layers of approval were reduced.

Managers overwhelmingly expressed a desire to be included in the decision-making process. Over two-thirds of the managers believe that decisions are made by a select few individuals in their agencies and that their management effectiveness would be enhanced if they were included more often in the decision-making process.

The managers who work in the central headquarters of their agency are evenly divided concerning the degree of control exercised over regional offices. Similarly, field office managers are evenly split in agreement and/or disagreement about the amount of support received from their agency's central office. When asked if improved communications would result in increased management effectiveness, 84.1% answered affirmatively.

66% of the respondents see a positive correlation between managerial accountability and productivity. In a related question, 63% of the managers indicated satisfaction with the way the lines of accountability are defined in their organization.

Most managers do not view political leadership within their agencies as having a significant impact on their abilities to accomplish management goals. Overwhelmingly, managers agreed that it was their responsibility to improve productivity within their office.

Not surprisingly, almost three-quarters, 72.3%, of the managers feel that they would be more effective with fewer regulations governing their actions.

Most managers, 63%, believe that low employee morale hampers their ability to manage. Interestingly, over 70% of the managers feel that they have the capabilities to improve employee morale, however, they desire more management tools with which to motivate their employees.

Managers expressed a positive attitude towards the management training courses in which they had participated. Almost 82% of the respondents stated that the training courses which they attended were relevant to their job. When asked if they had received adequate training in management principles and techniques, 62% of the respondents said that they had.

Managers feel a strong commitment towards meeting affirmative action goals. Slightly over one-third of the respondents view affirmative action requirements as an impediment to quality staffing while over one-half (51.5%) do not believe that affirmative action requirements are a significant obstacle to management objectives.

14.

Figure 5

Please read each of the following statements. Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or have No Opinion with each statement?

Tighter budget controls have had little or no impact on my ability to manage.

7.8%	Strongly Agree
35.9	Agree
27.4	Disagree
25.2	Strongly Disagree
3.3	No Opinion

I find it increasingly difficult to carry out my programs because of budget constraints.

21.5%	Strongly Agree
37.4	Agree
31.9	Disagree
4.1	Strongly Disagree

I have enough other resources and tools to effectively manage my operation in spite of the increasing budget constraints.

4.1	Strongly Agree
40.4	Agree
35.9	Disagree
15.6	Strongly Disagree
3.7	No Opinion

There are sufficient incentives for effective control of my budget.

7.4	Strongly Agree
43.7	Agree
22.2	Disagree
11.5	Strongly Disagree
15.1	No opinion

As a Federal manager, I am adequately trained in the budgeting process.

11.1	Strongly Agree
33.0	Agree
34.1	Disagree
17.8	Strongly Disagree
3.7	No Opinion

Federal managers find it increasingly difficult to manage due to the length of time required by the personnel system for hiring new employees.

43.3%	Strongly Agree
34.8	Agree
13.7	Disagree
1.5	Strongly Disagree
6.3	No Opinion

My agency's personnel office is responsive to my hiring needs.

4.8	Strongly Agree
35.5	Agree
30.0	Disagree
19.6	Strongly Disagree
6.6	No Opinion

If recruitment, examining, and selection were handled completely by my agency it would improve management's effectiveness in hiring qualified employees in a more timely manner.

31.9	Strongly Agree
34.1	Agree
17.4	Disagree
4.8	Strongly Disagree
11.4	No Opinion

The procurement process inhibits the timely completion of projects.

27.4	Strongly Agree
38.9	Agree
19.6	Disagree
1.9	Strongly Disagree
11.9	No Opinion

If the procurement process were simplified it would improve my ability to manage.

25.9	Strongly Agree
45.2	Agree
13.0	Disagree
1.1	Strongly Disagree
14.4	No Opinion

16.

The many layers of approval required for taking action hinder my effectiveness as a manager.

29.3%	Strongly Agree
43.7	Agree
21.9	Disagree
1.5	Strongly Disagree
3.4	No Opinion

If there were fewer layers of approval required for taking action I would be able to perform my job more effectively.

28.1	Strongly Agree
48.9	Agree
16.3	Disagree
.7	Strongly Disagree
5.6	No Opinion

Management decisions are made by a select few individuals in my agency.

31.5%	Strongly Agree
37.4	Agree
27.8	Disagree
2.2	Strongly Disagree
.7	No Opinion

Managers would be more effective if they were included more often in the decision-making process.

38.5	Strongly Agree
53.3	Agree
3.0	Disagree
0	Strongly Disagree
4.8	No Opinion

The Civil Service Reform Act will make the personnel system more responsive to my needs as a manager.

2.2	Strongly Agree
18.9	Agree
29.6	Disagree
17.0	Strongly Disagree
31.9	No Opinion

I am unable to hire and retain qualified employees as a result of an inadequate compensation package.

2.6%	Strongly Agree
27.8	Agree
40.0	Disagree
21.5	Strongly Disagree
7.8	No Opinion

I am confident that merit pay will be a useful management tool for rewarding effective employee performance.

3.3	Strongly Agree
24.8	Agree
33.7	Disagree
23.0	Strongly Disagree
14.8	No Opinion

The Senior Executive Service will attract and retain a higher quality manager in the Federal system.

3.3	Strongly Agree
19.6	Agree
32.6	Disagree
15.2	Strongly Disagree
28.9	No Opinion

Lack of adequate physical space is an impediment to effective management.

27.4	Strongly Agree
51.1	Agree
12.2	Disagree
3.3	Strongly Disagree
2.6	No Opinion

Additional physical space would improve employee effectiveness and morale.

30.0	Strongly Agree
47.4	Agree
13.7	Disagree
2.6	Strongly Disagree
6.0	No Opinion

18.

As a manager in my agency's central headquarters, I have adequate control over what is being done in the regional offices.

2.6%	Strongly Agree
25.5	Agree
20.2	Disagree
7.2	Strongly Disagree
43.8	No Opinion

As a field office manager, I receive adequate support from my headquarters office.

4.9	Strongly Agree
33.	Agree
21.3	Disagree
14.	Strongly Disagree
26.6	No Opinion

Federal managers could be more effective if there were improved communications between the field and central office staff.

25.6	Strongly Agree
58.5	Agree
2.2	Disagree
1.1	Strongly Disagree
12.3	No Opinion

As a Federal manager, my lines of accountability are clearly defined.

10.7	Strongly Agree
52.6	Agree
28.9	Disagree
6.3	Strongly Disagree
1.1	No Opinion

If managers in my agency were more accountable they would be more productive.

16.3	Strongly Agree
50.4	Agree
17.0	Disagree
1.1	Strongly Disagree
14.8	No Opinion

19.

Political appointees have significant impact on my role as a manager.

25.6%	Strongly Agree
19.3	Agree
31.1	Disagree
7.0	Strongly Disagree
16.7	No Opinion

Turnover in the top political leadership of my agency prevents me from accomplishing my management goals.

10.4	Strongly Agree
15.6	Agree
44.1	Disagree
10.0	Strongly Disagree
19.6	No Opinion

The Federal manager would be more effective with fewer regulations.

25.6	Strongly Agree
46.7	Agree
15.6	Disagree
2.2	Strongly Disagree
9.7	No Opinion

As a manager, I feel helpless in affecting employee morale.

4.8	Strongly Agree
21.1	Agree
54.4	Disagree
18.1	Strongly Disagree
1.1	No Opinion

Low employee morale hampers my ability to manage.

17.8	Strongly Agree
44.8	Agree
28.5	Disagree
4.1	Strongly Disagree
4.5	No Opinion

I have sufficient management tools to motivate my employees.

3.3	Stronglyly Agree
43.0	Agree
40.5	Disagree
10.7	Strongly Disagree
2.3	No Opinion

20.

I feel that I have received adequate training in management principles and techniques

11.9%	Strongly Agree
50.4	Agree
27.8	Disagree
6.7	Strongly Disagree
3.0	No Opinion

Training courses that I have attended are relevant to the types of problems I face as a manager.

11.9	Strongly Agree
70.0	Agree
14.1	Disagree
2.6	Strongly Disagree
1.1	No Opinion

As a manager, It is my responsibility to improve productivity in my office.

47.4	Strongly Agree
50.4	Agree
.4	Disagree
0	Strongly Disagree
1.5	No Opinion

My agency's affirmative action requirements hamper my ability to hire or promote the best qualified candidates.

14.8	Strongly Agree
21.9	Agree
43.0	Disagree
8.5	Strongly Disagree
11.5	No Opinion

I have a management responsibility for meeting affirmative action objectives.

34.1	Strongly Agree
53.0	Agree
4.8	Disagree
1.9	Strongly Disagree
6.0	No Opinion

Technical Note

This phase of the Problems in Management Project involved 269 questionnaires administered to Federal managers who attended the Federal Executive Institute or one of the three Federal Executive Seminar Centers between October 18, 1979 and December 5, 1979.

The resulting sample included managers from central, regional and area office locations and were in grades GS-13 through the Senior Executive Service. The average respondent is male, has worked in his agency's central office, has been in the Federal service for over 15 years and has been in his current position for one to three years. He is a career civil servant supervising zero to ten employees in a program/administrative management type of position. He is between the ages of 31 and 45.

The survey sample has the following characteristics:

<u>Job Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
. Central Office	126	46.7%
. Regional Office	69	25.6
. Area Office	34	12.6
. Miscellaneous	40	14.9
<u>Length of Service</u>		
. 1 year	1	.4 %
. 1 - 3	5	1.9
. 3 - 5	15	5.6
. 5 - 10	47	17.4
. 10 - 15	50	18.5
. 15	150	55.6
NA	1	.4

22.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Length in Positions</u>		
. < 6 months	27	10.0 %
. 6 months - 1 year	44	16.3
. 1 -- 3	98	36.3
. 3 -- 5	61	22.6
. >5	31	13.7
. NA	2	.8

Type of Appointment

. Career	236	86.7 %
. Non-Career	3	1..
. SES - Career	18	6.7
. SES - Non-career	4	1.7
. Miscellaneous	10	3.7

Number Employees Supervised

. 0 - 5	84	31.1 %
. 6 - 10	55	20.4
. 11 - 20	43	15.9
. 21 - 35	30	11.1
. 36 - 50	9	3.3
. 51 - 100	24	8.9
. > 100	23	8.5
. NA	1	.4

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Type of Management</u>		
. Program	111	40.1%
. Administrative	43	15.9
. Both	102	37.8
. Other	13	4.8
<u>Grade Level</u>		
. 13	79	29.3%
. 14	89	33.0
. 15	54	20.0
. 16, 17 and 18	5	1.9
. SES	21	7.8
. Miscellaneous/NA	21	7.7
<u>Age</u>		
. 21 - 30	4	1.5%
. 31 - 40	102	37.8
. 41 - 45	59	21.9
. 46 - 50	46	17.0
. 51 - 55	29	10.7
. over 55	22	8.1
. NA	7	2.6
<u>Sex</u>		
. Male	236	87.4 %
. Female	21	7.8
. NA	12	4.4

Although the sample used is not a scientifically drawn random sample for the purpose of this study it does provide an adequate base for studying the feelings of Federal managers with accuracy.

PHASE II

HIGHLIGHTS

A total of eighteen separate problems were identified by the managers who were interviewed in the person-to-person interviews which comprised the second phase of the Problems in Management Project. As mentioned earlier, each of these managers was asked to identify the three most critical problems that he/she faced on the job. Nearly two-thirds of all responses fell into six major categories. The categories are listed below in order of priority:

- o The staffing process -- recruitment, selection and certification -- and its relationship to hiring qualified candidates in a timely manner.
- o The difficulties in removing poor performers through the current disciplinary process.
- o The achievement of affirmative action objectives and the restrictions that they place upon the necessary flexibility of managers to hire and evaluate the most qualified individuals for career opportunities within their program area.
- o The administration of the merit pay process, and especially the potential for political abuse.
- o The insufficient number of permanent full time positions.
- o The inefficiency created by the many layers of approval and poor channels of communication required for any type of action to occur.

It is interesting to note that no significant differences were found in the responses of central and field office respondents, nor were there significant differences by grade level or sex.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Staffing

The managers that were interviewed expressed a marked concern about the staffing process. Many respondents identified the lengthy hiring procedure as a major impediment to filling positions with qualified candidates. It was repeatedly stated that the most highly qualified applicants were often unwilling to wait the necessary time required to be hired into the system. Other parts of the process which were mentioned as impediments to quality staffing were veteran's preference, the frequency of exams, non-competitive salaries, and non-current registers.

Discipline

The ability to remove poor performers in an expedient manner was described as the second major impediment to effective management. According to managers, the current process requires extensive documentation, consumes inordinate amounts of their time, and acts as a disincentive to removing "deadwood" employees. The burden of proof falls upon the manager who usually receives little or no support for his actions.

Managers believe that this situation results in lowered productivity and morale problems among employees who, in addition to their own responsibilities, must do the work that the poor performers do not accomplish.

Affirmative Action

Although most Federal managers believe in the concept of equal employment opportunity, affirmative action programs were described as presenting a variety of practical concerns. Managers stated that they felt they were being forced to meet ethnic quotas thereby sacrificing their ability to hire the most qualified individuals for the job. Several managers described affirmative action plans as being "a numbers racket" and felt that the quotas were unrealistic in view of the numbers of professional minorities available in the marketplace. They also stated that the preferential treatment which is accorded to minorities -- external recruitment and internal personnel policies -- is causing morale problems among non-minority employees.

26.

Merit Pay

There is a considerable amount of skepticism about the effectiveness of the merit pay plan as established under the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act. Managers are fearful that the process will become subject to political abuse and that the "buddy system" will be the determining factor in making merit pay awards.

Managers do not view merit pay as a useful management tool partly because they have not accepted the performance appraisal process as a credible and objective system for evaluation. Managers expressed a lack of understanding concerning the operation and linkage of a performance appraisal system to a merit pay plan.

Participation in Decision Making

The managers interviewed did not feel they were consulted in many of the decision-making processes of their agencies even though these decisions ultimately affect their responsibilities. They believe that many decisions are made independently of their input and often result in unrealistic directives. Managers also feel that poor channels of communication, both upward and downward, inhibit effective management practices. Once again, low morale on the part of the manager and the employee, decreased productivity, and inefficiency were described as the products of this problem.

Remaining Issues

The remaining responses were divided among eleven subject areas. Four of those areas which accounted for the largest percentage of these remarks (10%) were as follows:

Procurement - The procurement process is too time-consuming, too complex and cost ineffective.

Space - A lack of adequate physical space frustrates managers and employees alike, builds tension and lowers morale.

Budget - Managers feel a lack of control over the financial resources required to do their job.

Civil Service Reform Act - Managers feel that they are not receiving adequate technical support to implement the provisions of the Act.

Each of the final seven categories were mentioned only by a small number of respondents. They were grouped into the following areas: morale, performance appraisal, advancement, classification, creativity, productivity, and stress.

A complete list of all responses can be found in Table 7.

Figure 7

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Number of Responses*</u>	<u>Percent of all Responses</u>
Staffing	22	18.6%
Discipline	15	12.7%
EEO	13	11.0%
Ceilings	12	10.2%
Merit Pay	10	8.5
Participation in Decision Making	8	6.8
CSRA	5	4.2
Procurement	4	3.4
Space	4	3.4
Budget	3	2.5
Morale	2	1.7
Performance Appraisal	2	1.7
Miscellaneous-Personnel	11	9.3
Miscellaneous-General	7	5.9
Total	118	99.6

* Each of the 50 managers was asked to identify the top three problems facing him on the job, thus accounting for more than 50 responses.

28.

After the respondents were asked to identify the major problems faced on the job they were asked if they felt that they had any control over solving these problems. Overwhelmingly the respondents indicated that they felt helpless in affecting the situation. The responsibility for solving the problems, in their opinion, lay with the top leadership of their own agencies and/or with the central management agencies (i.e. OPM, OMB, GSA), with the Congress and with the President.

The managers had no concrete solutions to offer for solving any of the problems they mentioned, even if "resources were unlimited." The high degree of alienation and inability to effect change was quite apparent from the responses of the interviewees.

TECHNICAL NOTE

The fifty participants for these person-to-person interviews were selected randomly by the Directors of the Federal Training Centers without any input from the interviewers.

The resulting sample, although not statistically valid due to its limited size, is considered to be representative of Federal managers overall.

The respondents represent both field and central office assignments from around the country. They ranged from the GS-13 level through members of the Senior Executive Service. Their length of service ranged from a few years to more than twenty.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix A

United States of America
**Office of
Personnel Management**

(Questionnaire)

Washington, D.C. 20415

In Reply Refer To:

Your Reference:

Dear Survey Participant:

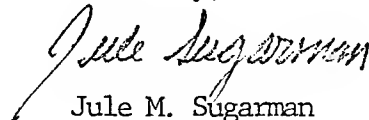
You have been selected to participate in a short survey we are conducting to assist us in identifying the major problems that face Federal managers in government today.

This survey is being administered at the Federal Executive Institute and at the Executive Seminar Centers during the months of October, November and December of 1979. The results of this survey will be analyzed by the Office of Personnel Management in order to enable us to better understand and address those issues which impact upon your managerial effectiveness.

We would appreciate it if you would respond to the questions in an open and honest manner. In order to assure the complete confidentiality of all questionnaires, your answers will be combined with others so that no individual responses will be reported or made available to anyone.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation.

Sincerely,


Jule M. Sugarman
Deputy Director

PROBLEMS IN MANAGEMENT SURVEY

DIRECTIONS:

1. Please read the questions carefully. If you do not understand a particular question, simply re-read the question and answer it to the best of your ability.
2. Please answer all questions in the space (s) provided.
3. Please print legibly.
4. Please answer all questions. Incomplete questionnaires are not valid.

1. As a manager in the Federal government what do you feel is the major problem you face in trying to accomplish your management goals?

2. Why is that a problem?

DO NOT
WRITE IN
THIS
SPACE

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____

5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____

2.

3. Do you consider this problem to be one for which the solution is within your span of control?

_____ Within control (SKIP TO 5)

_____ Not Within Control

4. What other office within your agency or other government agency, in your opinion, has the responsibility for the solution of this problem?

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

5. What are the other one or two major problems you face in your job as a Federal manager? Please explain why these are problems.

a) _____

12 _____

13 _____

14 _____

15 _____

b) _____

16 _____

17 _____

18 _____

19 _____

6. Listed below are several issues which have been identified as problems facing Federal managers today.

Please indicate whether you feel the issue is Very Important, Somewhat Important, or Not An Issue at All by circling the appropriate number.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not An Issue at All	Don't Know	
Accountability	1	2	3	4	20 _____
Central Headquarters -- Field Interface	1	2	3	4	21 _____
Physical Space	1	2	3	4	22 _____
Procurement Process	1	2	3	4	23 _____
Regulations	1	2	3	4	24 _____
Budget	1	2	3	4	25 _____
Layers of Approval	1	2	3	4	26 _____
Personnel System Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	27 _____
Employee Morale	1	2	3	4	28 _____

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not An Issue at All	Don't Know	
Compensation	1	2	3	4	29 _____
Political Pressures	1	2	3	4	30 _____
Affirmative Action Requirements	1	2	3	4	31 _____
Participation In Decision - Making	1	2	3	4	32 _____
Employment Ceilings	1	2	3	4	33 _____

Please read each of the following statements. Would you say that you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or have No Opinion with each statement?

7. Tighter budget controls have had little or no impact on my ability to manage.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

34 _____

8. I find it increasingly difficult to carry out my programs because of budget constraints.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

35 _____

9. I have enough other resources and tools to effectively manage my operation in spite of the increasing budget constraints.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

36 _____

5.

10. There are sufficient incentives for effective control of my budget.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

37 _____

11. As a Federal manager, I am adequately trained in the budgeting process.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

38 _____

12. Federal managers find it increasingly difficult to manage due to the length of time required by the personnel system for hiring new employees.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

39 _____

13. My agency's personnel office is responsive to my hiring needs.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

40 _____

14. If recruitment, examining, and selection were handled completely by my agency it would improve management's effectiveness in hiring qualified employees in a more timely manner.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

41 _____

6.

15. The Civil Service Reform Act will make the personnel system more responsive to my needs as a manager.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

42 _____

16. I am able to hire and retain highly qualified employees as a result of an adequate compensation package.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

43 _____

17. I am confident that merit pay will be a useful management tool for rewarding effective employee performance

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

44 _____

18. The Senior Executive Service will attract and retain a higher quality manager in the Federal system.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

45 _____

19. Lack of adequate physical space is an impediment to effective management.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

46 _____

20. Additional physical space would improve employee effectiveness and morale.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

47 _____

7.

21. The procurement process inhibits the timely completion of projects.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

48 _____

22. If the procurement process were simplified it would improve my ability to manage.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

49 _____

23. The many layers of approval required for taking action hinder my effectiveness as a manager.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

50 _____

24. If there were fewer layers of approval required for taking action I would be able to perform my job more effectively.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

51 _____

25. Management decisions are made by a select few individuals in my agency.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

52 _____

26. Managers would be more effective if they were included more often in the decision-making process.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

53 _____

8.

27. (Answer 26 or 27) As a manager in my agency's central head-
quarters, I have adequate control over what is being done in
the regional offices.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
_____ No Opinion

54 _____

28. As a field office manager, I receive adequate support from
my headquarters office.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
_____ No Opinion

55 _____

29. Federal managers could be more effective if there were improved
communications between the field and central office staff.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
_____ No Opinion

56 _____

30. As a Federal manager, my lines of accountability are clearly
defined.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
_____ No Opinion

57 _____

31. If managers in my agency were more accountable they would be more
productive.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
_____ No Opinion

58 _____

32. Political appointees have significant impact on my role as a manager.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

59 _____

33. Turnover in the top political leadership of my agency prevents me from accomplishing my management goals.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

60 _____

34. The Federal manager would be more effective with fewer regulations.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

61 _____

35. As a manager, I feel helpless in affecting employee morale.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

62 _____

36. Low employee morale hampers my ability to manager.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

63 _____

37. I have sufficient management tools to motivate my employees.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

64 _____

10.

38. I feel that I have received adequate training in management principles and techniques.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

65 _____

39. Training courses that I have attended are relevant to the types of problems I face as a manager.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

66 _____

40. As a manager, it is my responsibility to improve productivity in my office.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

67 _____

41. My agency's affirmative action requirements hamper my ability to hire or promote the best qualified candidates.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

68 _____

42. I have a management responsibility for meeting affirmative action objectives.

_____ Strongly Agree
 _____ Agree
 _____ Disagree
 _____ Strongly Disagree
 _____ No Opinion

69 _____

The following information is needed to help us with the statistical analysis of the data. All responses are strictly confidential.

11.

43. Are you employed in your agency's central office or in a field office?

☐ Central Office
☐ Regional Office
☐ Area Office
☐ Other (Please specify) _____

70

44. How many years have you been employed by the Federal government?

☐ less than one year
☐ one to three years
☐ three to five years
☐ five to 10 years
☐ ten to fifteen years
☐ over fifteen years

71

45. How long have you held your current position?

☐ less than six months
☐ six months to one year
☐ one to three years
☐ three to five years
☐ over five years

72

46. What type of appointment are you serving under?

☐ Career ☐ SES Career
☐ Non-Career ☐ SES Non-Career
☐ Other (Please specify) ☐ SES Limited

73

47. How many employees are under your direct supervision?

☐ 0 -5
☐ 6 -10
☐ 11 -20
☐ 21 -35
☐ 36 -50
☐ 51 -100
☐ Over-100

74

48. Would you say that your position falls into the program management category, the administrative management category, both categories or what?

☐ Program
☐ Administrative
☐ Both
☐ Other (Please specify) _____

75

12.

49. What grade level is your current appointment? (GS, ES, FS, other pay system).

Pay System: _____ Grade Level: _____

76 _____

77 _____

50. Into which age group do you fall?

- _____ Under 21
- _____ 21 - 30
- _____ 31 - 40
- _____ 41 - 45
- _____ 46 - 50
- _____ 51 - 55
- _____ Over 55

78 _____

51. (Optional) Sex:

- _____ Male
- _____ Female

79 _____

APPENDIX B

PERSON-TO-PERSON INTERVIEW

Appendix B

PROBLEMS FACING MANAGEMENT SURVEY

FACE-TO-FACE INQUIRY

1. What is the number one problem facing you as a manager today?
2. Why is that a problem? (PROBE: How specifically does that affect your ability to manage?)
3. Do you have control over this? If you don't who does?
4. Is this problem specific to your agency or would you say it is a problem which affects managers throughout the Federal government?
5. If you were in a position to solve this problem, how would you do it?
6. What are some of the other major problems which affect you as a Federal manager? (Repeat questions 2, 3, 4, and 5)